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THE  
BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

THE TEMPLE OF OPPRESSION; BY DAVID CHANDLEE, A BLACKSMITH IN WILMINGTON, STATE OF DELAWARE, NORTH-AMERICA.

IN one of my mental rambles into the fields of national policy, I felt a disposition to congratulate myself on being born a citizen of the United States of America, the land of freedom; and was led into a grateful exultation of mind on considering the high privileges to which I was heir above my fellow creatures who were born under despotic governments, in the shades of tyranny.

But notwithstanding the disposition I felt to be happy in my privileges, a secret involuntary feeling of my own situation, taught me by some certain indelible impressions, that I myself, as an individual, am oppressed in this favoured land. I started at the thought.—How, said I, can an individual be oppressed in a land of freedom, where the government is professedly appointed to protect the equal rights of the people?—I felt a painful suspense. At this moment I was alarmed with the approach of a person of great dignity; his countenance was such as commanded an awful respect from the beholders; and his whole deportment bespoke him one of no common birth.—He was unattended.—I rose, and with a submissive modesty was going to retire, when, in a gentle harmonious voice, he thus accosted me: “Be not disturbed at my pre-

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sence: I have for some time beheld thee, and now am come on business that to most men is ungrateful, I am therefore rejected by them, and my service not accepted, but I hoped better of thee.”

With this I turned, and addressing my visitant, said, “Why should one that is unknown to me, and by whom I am unknown, accost me in such language? Deign therefore, to inform me, who, and whence thou art, that I may know by whom I am honoured with this visit?” To this, with the most benign aspect, he made reply—“It may be I am unknown to thee; to me thou art not unknown, I know all the mortal race; and am witness to all their folly and extravagance, though to them I am unknown, even while they boast of being my companions, and persecute their brethren with vindictive malice, if they dare dispute their selfish testimony. I am the Genius of Wisdom, once the companion of men, but long since rejected by them, and driven from their society. I now make my abode in the realms of light, distant from their habitations; whence I am always ready to descend, and instruct every candid individual who is willing to unshackle his soul from the tyranny of prepossession, and yield to impartial inquiry; and for this end I now wait upon thee.”

At this I felt my vanity sufficiently awakened; and with exultation, said, “Shall my humble temples be graced with the wreath of wisdom? I shall surely then be eman-

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cipated from all oppression, and made as free as the birds." But immediately a gloomy suspicion covered my mind, and I began to view my visitant as an impostor. I stood irresolute:—but on beholding the majesty and serenity of his countenance, distrust vanished, and I determined to yield to his instructions, and forthwith declared my resolution.

"If thou," said he, "wouldst be instructed by the precepts of pure wisdom, ascend, with me, yon ethereal mountain, from whose summit we can view the earth below as it really is." At this I looked round, and the mountain appeared in view; but here again I stood irresolute, least my weak head should swim with the giddy height, and I should fall the disgrace of my researches. But my instructor, without seeming to take notice of my embarrassment, turned toward the mountain, and began the ascent; while I, but half resolved, followed after, with trembling caution. We had not ascended far, before I found my prepossessions from habit and education, to impede my passage very much, and make the journey laborious: I therefore threw them away, one by one, as I grew weary of them, till, by the time we arrived at the top, I had cast them all away but a very few of the most precious: among these I had preserved the impressions that were made on my mind in early life, of the most acceptable forms of addressing the Majesty of Heaven: and though I found them heavy, I considered their weight as a testimony of their value, and was obstinately resolved never to part with them.

From this height I cast a view on the world.—It all lay before me. I saw a huge temple that filled at least one third of the whole earth; the walls were of a dusky hue; the

top was open, and the whole mansion constantly exposed to open view before the heavenly host. The walls on the outside were hung with a thick veil of darkness; and a thick gloom unceasingly hung over it. I beheld it crowded with votaries of both sexes, each one preferring a private petition for himself, and recommending himself to the power that presided, with restless anxiety. I observed the gloom of the place obscured the throng very much from each other, and every one prided himself in the thought of secrecy, and fancied the contents of his petition unknown, though his neighbour at the same time held one for himself in the very same words: but if they ever got a glimpse of each other's designs, they were mutually awakened on both sides to malicious jealousy, and regarded one another as enemies.

I beheld a gloomy power seated in the midst of the temple, to whom every one, without distinction of birth, education, or sex, addressed themselves with the same partiality for themselves, and showed each of them a restless anxiety to be heard; but a multitude of them notwithstanding their solicitude, were wholly disregarded, and wearied themselves with importunity unnoticed. I observed a few of the most clamorous and intriguing obtain a part of their request; but I remarked the grant always fell short of the desire, and the most favoured were dismissed under a degree of anxiety and disappointment.

On beholding these things, I addressed my guide, and desired to know what mansion I beheld; and who presided, that thus infatuated mankind, and engrossed their whole attention, to the destruction of their happiness? To which he replied, "The mansion thou beholdest is the Temple of Oppression; and the

power that presides is Mammon, by whose tyranny and injustice mankind have been made miserable. His votaries are the instruments of oppression and cruelty; and the world is tormented under his power. The veil of darkness that covers his walls, and the gloom that overspreads his court, is common custom, which is impervious to the mental vision of man, unless assisted by my power." Here my kind visitant administered of the same eye-salve that John the divine recommended to the church of Laodicea, whereby the film is purged from the intellectual sight, and power is given to see things as they really are.

Being thus commissioned, I shall attempt, if possible, to show what the society of mankind are doing to themselves and to each other. But the complicated customs that have taken place, and the prepossessions we have imbibed in favour of them, have involved us in such a cloud of darkness, that we are unable to penetrate it, and take a distinct view of mankind in the aggregate. Therefore, in order to simplify our prospect, let us suppose we are planting a new colony; and let no intercourse with the rest of mankind have any influence on the effects arising from the order of their own body; and then attentively consider the consequences attending their several steps toward civilized refinement. Let us choose ninety families to place in this point of view. Let us first make the land common property, for there is every reason to believe that each of us have a natural right to it, as much as to the air we breathe, or the light of the sun. Let each man that chooses husbandry have a sufficient portion of land for his purpose, and be secured in the produce of his own labour. And those who choose mechanical callings, or manufacturing, be promoted by the society.

In this order the several demands for necessary articles, would presently point out the number of hands that each calling will require.

With things thus arranged our colonists may abound with every thing desirable, and necessary to make life comfortable, with a small portion of labour to each person; nor will there be a debtor, or discontented person among them, because there is nothing in their practice that excites covetousness or ambition: but the small exchange of property, between husbandmen, mechanics, and manufacturers, will make a very small market; and the society will know no distinction, but in the great plenty that rewards superior industry. In this arrangement, labour will bear no price: its value will always be equal to the value of the property it produces.

Let us now attempt to make a market for our colonists, where they may sell the surplus of their produce, and gratify themselves with getting money to lay by. But in this undertaking, we have but one only mean without an alternative, for there is but one principle in nature that gives us a possibility of doing it: that is, to exempt a part of the citizens from labour, or we can never increase the market for the rest; for those who produce their own supplies, make no demand for supplies from another and.

Let us now take fifteen families, and place them in a line of trade, between the husbandmen, mechanics, and manufacturers; let each of these sell the surplus of produce in their several callings, first to these traders; and purchase again of them such other articles as they stand in need of. By this means, we can exempt one-sixth part of our colonists from labour; and in so doing we increase the demand for the necessaries of life in the same

proportion, and form a market one-sixth part brisker than the former. But to provide for the support of these traders in the line of their calling, we must allow them a profit on their dealings for that purpose, and, as our estimate supposes, about half their property to be exchanged, by one-sixth of their citizens, that profit, of course, must amount to about thirty-four per centum. And for this thirty-four per cent. the purchasers receives no value whatever, for the articles traded in, receive no advantage, neither in texture nor quality, from having been the property of the traders; it is a mode of increasing the price of goods, without increasing their value. Here the links of cause and effect are plain, that by exempting one-sixth part of our colonists from labour, we increase the demand for necessities in the same proportion, and this demand increases the market, but by purchasing goods of them at thirty-four per cent. advance on the price, we reduce the price of labour one-sixth below the value of the property it produces; and, consequently, the labouring part must use one-sixth more labour than was necessary before the traders were introduced.

In order to refine our colonists yet further, let us create three magistrates to decide civil causes, and provide for them by a tax; and three ministers for the order of worship, and provide for them by a tythe; let us make the land private property, and make titles for it to six landlords, and provide for them with rents; and create three usurers, and provide for them with interest: by these means we can remove fifteen families more from labour, and enable them through these inventions to draw the means of their support from the labour of the rest. We have now removed

one-third part of our supposed colonists from labour, and in so doing, we have made their markets one-third brisker than at first; but by creating an idle order of citizens, and enabling them to claim one-third of the produce of labour, without giving produce in exchange for it, we have reduced the price of labour one-third below its true value, and consequently the labouring part are brought under a burden one-third part heavier than their Creator ever laid on them, or appointed them to bear. In this state of political refinement, our colony is composed of debtors and creditors, and the debtors, feeling themselves in an uncomfortable situation, are powerfully lured to covetousness, because a release from their present embarrassment is desirable, and of this release they have no prospect, unless they can change hands with their creditors. Thus, fraud, deceit, ambition, and oppression, go hand in hand.

If we remove a subject from the portion of labour that God hath ordained to produce a supply for his wants, we must necessarily give him a claim on the labour of others; and it matters not, whether we give him an office under the government, and call his claim a tax, or give him an office in the church, and call it tythe or salary; make him a trader, and call it profits; make him a landlord, and call it rents; or make him a usurer, and call it interest; any difference we can create in the mode or the name, makes no difference in the reality, for in every form it is a claim on the labourer, without a consideration given in return. Therefore, every one that ceases to labour for his own supplies, will, according to his style of living, equally contribute to the rise of markets. And every one that exacts tax, tythe, rents, interest, or profits on goods,

adds his weight in proportion to the size of his claim, to the oppression of his country; and if we cultivate the causes, it is as impossible to escape the effects, as to reverse the power of gravity.

After taking this view of the several parts, I cast my eyes once more over the mass of civilized mankind. I saw the rich exercising their power, and commanding their agents to enter into the houses of the poor, and carry away their goods without the consent of the owners; I saw them dividing them by sale, at one half of their value, and in many instances seizing the bodies of debtors, and casting them into prison, often to the unspeakable distress of their children and families, and all this to satisfy the claims they exacted from labour, by rents, usury, profits, &c. Thus they distress a man and his house, and the price of his goods is taken a spoil, to grace the coffers of the rich.

Upon this prospect, I stood, like Hamlet's Ghost, motionless and speechless! But, after some time, recovering my surprise a little, I turned to my guide, and said, "What can induce these people to commit such cruelties on their fellow-creatures? They have obtained a considerable part of their petitions, many of them have already abundance; and are in much happier situations than those they distress. What is the motive for such conduct?" To which he replied, "The conditions that their petitions are granted upon, are, that they shall render Mammon perpetual service, and this is the service he requires; for this end he has granted the power they exercise; and if they refuse to employ it, he revokes his former grant, and threatens to reduce them to poverty, and compel them to work, or to suffer worse. This threat terrifies them,

and they continue to torture the helpless part of mankind."

While I continued to look on the prospect before me, I beheld the inhabitants of the temple, gathered at certain periods into different congregations, where they assembled regularly, and spent about two hours at a time. During these times, they appeared very attentively engaged in some pursuit of knowledge, or some serious inquiry: but I remarked, there were very few of the poor frequented these assemblies, and if any did, they were taken little or no notice of by the rest, and seemed to be welcomed among them with cold indifference. I inquired the meaning of this; to which my guide answered, "These people believe there is one Supreme God, whose power is superior to all other powers, both in Heaven and Earth, and that He controuls all other powers, and that even Mammon reigns by his indulgence; they likewise believe, that they themselves shall occupy a future state of existence after death, and that in futurity, they will be transcendently happy, or miserable, according to the degree of favour in which they are beheld by his Divine Majesty; they are therefore ambitious of being his favourites for their own sakes, that they may enjoy the happiness that each one desires for himself; and these assemblies are appointed for public prayers, and to give the Almighty such adulation as may wheedle him to assist them here on earth in effecting their purposes, and afterwards to gratify them in like manner in a future state. For this end, they invent the most humiliating and servile form of words, and make the terms of address very humble on their own part, often repeating the words, "Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" but in

all their conduct and course of action, the secret prayers and desires of their hearts are, "Father, do my will on earth and in heaven:" their tyranny and injustice to the poor, while they do their will on earth, is such, that they have very little confidence in the prayers of the rich, being available; and therefore they stay at home, and pray secretly to be delivered from their power." I observed, likewise, that many of them passed some places of public prayer, and went to others more distant, and the members of different congregations frequently passed each other upon the way, and on these occasions, regarded each other with indifference, unless the parties possessed large estates, and in that case they were mostly civil to each other. I desired to know the reason of this. My guide, therefore, informed me, That they were divided into many sects, and between each sect there was some small difference in the forms of address, yet under every form, the substance of the address was the very same, and the expectations of the supplicants agreed with the greatest exactness. But notwithstanding this agreement in desire, each believed his own form peculiarly pleasing to the Deity, and regard himself as a favourite on that account, and they have had so many quarrels among themselves on this account; that they are mutually tainted with malice one towards another.

At this scene I was filled with horror and amazement, and exclaimed, "What can be done to redeem mankind from this misery, is there no redemption?" To this the Genius replied, "There is no redemption, but by yielding to my precepts; and these, mankind generally reject, that they may follow their own counsels. The will of

God is plain enough to every candid attentive mind, the knowledge of it is impressed on the human heart, as far as relates to present duty, in strong characters. To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, comprises the whole duty of man, and those who do these things, do the will of the Father on earth, as it is done in Heaven. But man is able to separate his will from the will of God, and when he does so, and becomes a doer of his own will, he does unjustly, he shows very little mercy to the poor, and he walks in pride and arrogance, and not in humility; instead of serving God, he serves his own lusts. To this state he becomes attached by habit, and his foolish heart is darkened, and he persuades himself, that God has the same partiality for him, that he feels for himself; and mistakes his own approbation for the approbation of Heaven.

"In this state, he is averse to all inquiry, and if any one attempt to enlighten him, he charges him with heresy and innovation, and raises the cry of a dangerous person on him: and all this is, not because the cause of God would suffer by his doctrine, but because his own cause would suffer. This was once fully exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, who was anointed with wisdom above his fellows, and divinely commissioned to teach the will of the Father to men, in vocal words, that his divine law might reign on earth, as it does in Heaven, and mankind might be redeemed from all the cruelties and injustice they suffer from one another. The consequence of his mission, as far as related to his own person here on earth, is not unknown: the servants and favourites of Mammon cast him out of the synagogue, and banished him from their houses of public prayer as an innovator, and afterwards seized

him, and put him to death as a dangerous person. They accused him on pretence of blasphemy, but the true cause of their clamour was, lest the people should believe him, and the Romans should come and take away their name and nation. Hence, when their zealous cruelty was stripped of its guise, it appeared, that their fears were for their own cause, and not the cause of God. They likewise boasted among themselves, that none of the rulers had believed him; and the reason they would not, was, because no ruler would sacrifice his own private cause to the common cause of God among mankind; therefore, the publicans and harlots were nearer the kingdom than they were, and went in before them."

"This," said I, "could not be so much wondered at in that age of ignorance and bigotry; but in this enlightened age, when the clouds of superstition are daily vanishing, and men are releasing themselves from the yoke of tyranny, and asserting their native rights, if an eloquent person were commissioned by thee to preach the precepts of wisdom; they would, no doubt, gain converts." To this he answered with a smile, "Thy faith is great in the present enlightened age. But the Pharisees were as enlightened in their own eyes as the present generation: and laid the same accusation of ignorance and blindness against their fathers, for spilling the blood of the prophets, that we do against them for spilling the blood of Christ. But as custom makes a considerable impression on the human mind, it may be, that the magistracy and clergy might bear an attack with a tolerable degree of patience; but as landlords, usurers, and speculators, have not since the days of the prophets been generally sus-

pected for oppression, we may be assured, that to interfere with them would be as bad as to touch a nest of hornets."

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*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

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GENTLEMEN,

HAVING lately had the pleasure of looking through a large collection of valuable manuscripts, which treat in many parts of Irish manners, and customs, particularly during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; I found mention of several Irish exactions, of which I had not before heard, nor do I yet know their meaning, nor how they were collected. Their names are *Breyne-Balafs-Erick*, *Logh-Tavie*, and *Logh-Yempies*; all were in 1580, collected in the county of Antrim, and abolished by proclamation of the Lord Deputy, a few years afterwards. Perhaps some of your antiquarian correspondents, on your inserting this article, would furnish me with some particulars relative to their names, how they were collected, and why?

J.S.

*Knockmor, June 12th, 1812.*

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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DIALOGUE, ON SIGNING THE PROTESTANT PETITION.

(Continued from Vol. 3, page 451.)

NED. Neighbour Pat, I have purchased the Magazine, and am surprised to see the names of my intimate acquaintances there. I would not have thought it strange to have seen T., H., and P.'s names, who have little or no religion; but teachers of the flock, and others who profess to fear, love, and serve God, mingling with the worshippers of